<u>PATENT</u>

Appl. No. Amdt. dated December 8, 2003 Preliminary Amendment

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The specification is hereby amended. No new matter is introduced by this amendment.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 925-472-5000.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments GTG:sea 60093159 v1